

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 13, 2005

Contact: Dave Gould

209-536-2916

## COLUMBIA STATE HISTORIC PARK WINS NATIONAL PRESERVATION AWARD

Columbia State Historic Park has earned a national preservation award for its role in preserving California's Gold Rush history. The citation, called the Phoenix Award, was presented to the park by the Society of American Travel Writers.

The society, the world's oldest and largest organization of travel writers and photographers, presents these awards each year to organizations that work to protect and preserve historic sites in the United States and beyond. Columbia was one of only four sites to receive the award this year.

Columbia State Park officials and Friends of Columbia State Historic Park were honored for their work in restoring the Knapp Block, which houses the park museum and several historic storefronts. The \$3.5 million rehabilitation project, funded by a state parks bond, began in 2002 and was completed last March.

Don and Betty Martin, Society of American Travel Writers members and part-time Columbia residents, nominated the park for the award, and Don made the presentation at the park on December 12th. Accepting it on behalf of the park were Dave Gould, superintendent of the Calaveras sector of the California Department of Parks and Recreation; Kim Baker, supervising ranger of Columbia State Historic Park; and Floyd Oydegaard, president of the Friends of Columbia State Historic Park.

"The Knapp Block project was the motive for our nomination," Martin said. "However, we've wanted to see the park get recognition for its preservation work ever since we moved here. State Park people and volunteers have been working to preserve this piece of Gold Rush history for sixty years, since the park was established in 1945."

The Martins, who own a small publishing company called DiscoverGuides, moved to Columbia from the San Francisco Bay Area in 1988. They later shifted their company to southern Nevada, although they still maintain a part-time home here. We were really glad to see Columbia get the award, since very few are given out each year, and they're given on an international basis, Martin said."

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Other 2005 recipients were the Jungfrau scenic railway in Bern, Switzerland; the Pamplin Historical Park and National Museum of the Civil War Soldier in Petersburg, Virginia; and Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park in southern Nevada.

In choosing Columbia as a Phoenix recipient, the society's award committee said the State Park "is about gold and its place in California history. It welcomes...tourists who learn about the gold rush that triggered one of the largest mass migrations in the world."

Alternate Contact:

Don & Betty Martin at DiscoverGuides

[discoverguides@earthlink.net](mailto:discoverguides@earthlink.net)

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